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Message Text

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42
ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-11 IGA-02 EUR-25

IO-14 NIC-01 ACDA-19 DRC-01 /187 W
---------- 043462
R 251120Z MAY 74
FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8595
INFO AMEMBASSY COTONOU
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

UNCLAS ABIDJAN 4109

E O 11652: NA
TAGS: PFOR, NG, IV
SUBJ: INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT KOUNTCHE

1. PROBABLY WITH THE COUNCIL OF THE ENTENTE'S FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY NEXT WEEK IN MIND, IVORIAN TELEVISION SENT TEAM TO NIAMEY TO INTERVIEW PRESIDENT KOUNTCHE RECENTLY. THE FORTY-MINUTE RESULT WAS BROADCAST MAY 22. AS WE HEARD THEM, KOUNTCHE'S MAIN POINTS AS FOLLOWS:

2. NEW GOVERNMENT WILL FOLLOW POLICY OF INNOVATION AND RENOVATION, EMPHASIS ON DEVELOPMENT, FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER, FREEDOM FOR NIGER'S CADRES TO WORK TO FULLEST EXTENT OF THEIR POTENTIAL AND TRAINING. ON LATTER POINT, KOUNTCHE NOTED THAT DIORI GOVERNMENT FAVORED CERTAIN GROUPS OF PEOPLE, NEGLECTING THE CADRES. NEW GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO WORK TO IMPROVE LIVES OF NIGER'S WORKING CLASS.

3. SMC AIMS TO GIVE COUNTRYMEN CONFIDENCE. REVOLUTION BEING UNDERTAKEN IS WITH SMALL R, NOT SOMETHING RADICAL BUT SOLID,
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INTENSIVE. STRESS PLACED NUMBER OF TIMES ON NEED FOR DIGNITY.

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4. FOREIGN POLICY. GON WILL NOT MIX INTO AFFARIS OF OTHERS AND HOPES OTHER COUNTRIES FOLLOW SAME POLICY. RE COOPERATION, NIGER DOES NOT WANT TO CONTINUE THE OUTSTRETCHED HAND POLICY BUT WANTS AN HONEST COOPERATION, WITH EMPHASIS ON AGRICULTURE AND ON LOCALIZED ACTIVITY SO THAT PEOPLE CAN SEE RESULTS.

5. FORMER LEADERS. WISH ASSURE IVORIAN FRIENDS THAT THERE WILL BE NO INHUMAN MEASURES APPLIED TO FORMER OFFICIALS. INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN THAT THOSE IMPRISONED WILL NOT LIVE ON LEVEL MUCH BELOW THAT TO WHICH THEY ACCUSTOMED. SMC NOW AWAITING RESULTS OF WORK BEING DONE BY INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE.

6. DROUGHT. FORMER OFFICIALS PROFITED AND WERE LAZY. NEW GOVERNMENT FOCUSSING ESSENTIALLY ON QUESTION OF DISTRIBUTION OF DROUGHT RELIEF. SINCE MUCH GRAIN TRANSITS NIGERIA, SMC HAS SENT THREE MISSIONS THERE SINCE APRIL 15. GENERAL GOWON DESERVES CONSIDERABLE CREDIT; HE HAS HELPED MOBILIZE 400 TRUCKS TO TRANSPORT GRAIN TO NIGER.

7. ENTENTE. IT IS A HUMANITARIAN, BROTHERLY MOVEMENT WHICH CONTINUES DESPITE ALL CHANGES, A DISINTERESTED FORM OF COOPERATION. HOMMAGE TO PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET. NOTING TWICE HE WAS SPEAKING AS PRESIDENT OF THE ENTENTE, KOUNTCHE EXPRESSED HOPE ORGANIZATION'S WORK WOULD BE DEVOTED TO DEVELOPMENT, WITH DIGNITY.

8. IVORIAN REPORTER TERMINATED BY ASKING HOW LONG THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT WOULD REMAIN IN POWER. KOUNTCHE, HAVING GIVEN RATIONALE FOR TAKEOVER AS ONE OF DESIRE TO PUT ORDER INTO A SITUATION WHICH HAD LASTED TOO LONG, SAID IT DIFFICULT TO GIVE PRECISE ANSWER TO QUESTION. MILITARY WILL HAVE TO SEE HOW THINGS GO; ORDER MUST PREVAIL ABOVE ALL OTHER CONSIDERATIONS. NEW INSTITUTIONS WILL HAVE TO BE FUNCTIONING WELL BEFORE MILITARY WILL DEPART SCENE.
SMITH

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